

a) the purpose of the clear coat layer 14 is to provide a high gloss finish to the products made from the laminate 10 and to protect the substrate layer 12 (e.g., so as to provide a layer which is resistant to scratching, UV radiation, abrasions, marring, heat and weathering). Most preferably, the clear coat layer includes a fluorinated thermoplastic (e.g., a polyvinyl fluoride, PVF). One particularly preferred PVF that may be employed as a clear coat layer 14 in the laminates 10 of the present invention is TEDLAR[®] polyvinyl fluoride commercially available from E.I. duPont de Nemours, Inc. ("duPont") of Wilmington, Delaware. Most preferably, the clear coat layer employed in the present invention is the duPont TEDLAR[®] TTR 10 AH8 and TEDLAR[®] TTR 10 AM8 polyvinyl fluoride.

The thickness of the clear coat layer will typically be between about 0.1 mil to about 4.0 mils, and typically between about 0.5 mil to about 1.5 mils. An especially preferred thickness of the clear coat layer is about 1.0 mil. In this regard, it will be understood that the thickness of the clear coat layer 14 expressed immediately above is in the absence of any protective layer that may be provided by the supplier as a means to protect the clear coat during processing and/or to assist the lamination of the clear coat layer to the substrate layer 12.

When employing PVF as the clear coat layer, it is advantageous that a surface thereof be primed with a layer of a suitable adhesion promoting agent. For example, when PVF is employed as a clear coat material in accordance with the present invention, it is preferred that one surface layer of the PVF film be primed with a layer of an acrylic polymer functioning as the adhesion promoting agent.

¹ Pursuant to Rule 121(b), a marked-up version of the affected specification paragraph(s) appears in Appendix I hereto and shows all changes by underlining added language and bracketing deleted language.